



1117th meeting of the
Pacific Coast Numismatic Society
7:30PM Wednesday May 27, 2009
Building C, Fort Mason
San Francisco, California

Twentieth Century Coin Models
Whalen



Pacific Coast Numismatic Society
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Please join us May 27, 2009 to hear Whalen tell us about the people who modeled for twentieth century coins.

1116th meeting, The 1894 California Midwinter Exposition

Jeff Shevlin (reviewed by Herb)

Jeff Shevlin and his lovely wife Cecilia came down from Sacramento for the day to treat us to a talk about the first world's fair in San Francisco.

Jeff mentioned that he has been working on a new book on So-called Dollars although it will not be a sequel to the Hibler/Kappen reference but rather a completely new book with another thousand or so new issues.

Jeff defined "so-called" dollars as souvenir medals without a value appearing on the pieces so they never were a medium of exchange in contrast to "good for" tokens which are well known to many PCNS'ers. Additionally, most of them are around 38.1 mm, or about the size of a silver dollar, which makes for a nice size to depict a wide variety of images.

The 1894 California Midwinter Exposition held in San Francisco on the grounds of Golden Gate Park is the source of several dozen issues.

This fair or exposition grew out of the 1892-1893 World's Columbian Exposition as Michael de Young, publisher and owner of the San Francisco Chronicle, was vice president of the Columbian Commission. He sensed an opportunity to bring the exhibits and notoriety of the Columbian Exposition from Chicago to the west coast.

After convincing a number of San Francisco businessmen of the fair's value and after a whirlwind building process, eight months after proposing the idea, the California Midwinter opened on January 27, 1894. Although the buildings were beautifully outfitted, they had not been built to last more than the duration of the fair or one San Francisco winter.

Nevertheless, the numismatic output of souvenir medals was impressive: The brass "Official Medal" depicted the California State Seal; seated figure (Eureka), the California Black Bear, San Francisco Bay with ship, the mountains of Marin County, and the word "Eureka" in the field above the figure.

On the reverse was written: "Souvenir California Midwinter Exposition San Francisco 1894 Sunshine Fruit And Flowers" implying that California in midwinter was full of sunshine unlike the

frigid Midwest or East Coast. If this motto was designed to attract permanent residents to the West Coast, it probably succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of the businessmen who sponsored the fair.

The medals show various scenes from the fair, some fanciful as they were probably produced before it opened. The "Electric Tower" was a favorite theme; designed to mimic the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the final design fell a bit short, but it still produced a beam of light that could be seen for miles and apparently was bright enough to allow reading at night.

The "Administration Building" also was portrayed as was the "Firth Wheel," not to be confused with the larger "Ferris Wheel" that had first appeared at the Columbian Exposition.

Some of the nicest pieces depict a bird's eye view of the grounds or show the various buildings; Mechanical Arts, Manufactures, or Fine Arts. Even Michael de Young's portrait appears on one so-called dollar. Most of these medals were made in aluminum, a fairly new metal at the time as scientists had only recently found a method to extract it from its ore.

In his collection, Jeff exhibited a number of newly discovered unlisted pieces and some magnificent specimens with full strikes, luster and beautiful detail! Thanks Jeff and Cecilia!

April 2009 RAFFLE

Mark won a new book, "Coins of Northern Europe & Russia" by Cuhaj and Michael.

Scott donated a book, "World Coins, 1701-1800" by Krause/Mishler but I am not sure who won it.

Ed took home a Jefferson Peace Medal donated by absent member Ken.

Whalen won a Statue of Liberty commemorative.

Gordon won a George Washington half dollar commemorative. And, an American Bicentennial John Adams medal also went to Whalen!

April 2009 Exhibits

Ed T. brought two coins to share; an 1881 CC NGC 64 GSA hoard dollar and a 2006 MS 70 First Strike Gold Eagle.

Mark exhibited a GGIE deck of playing cards with a bit of wear, and a huge library copy of a mapping book on the TransMississippi West.

Whalen showed off his 1873 Shield nickel with large over small date, a Cherry Picker's Guide find!

Herb brought an 1894 Midwinter Sterling Silver spoon, a PPIE fob and a Large PPIE/CPIE "Penny."

Michael brought his collection of 1894 Midwinter so-called dollars, including the very rare "Dahomey Village" transportation token, probably made in San Francisco since it is signed by L H Moise.

Scott exhibited two slabbed copper pieces; a Peru 1823 1/8 Peso (PCGS MS63 R&B) and a Mexico Puebla (Tetela Del Oro Y Ocampo) revolutionary coin from 1915 (KM 759) PCGS Ms 64 RB.

Our guest, Ed H. exhibited his extensive collection of Midwinter collectibles; what a treat to see all the pieces in Ed's collection!!

And Steve brought Jeff's CSNA Sponsor medal to hand off to Mr. Shevlin.